2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

Though made by men or women, there is something almost supernatural about a *gwma*: its manufacture is called 'giving birth to' (*ku dzwala digwma*) and though, for example, in the case of a dancing *gwma*, every one knows that some person is playing the part, this in no way detracts from its importance. Many of the *digwma* are masked figures in costumes made of grass, reeds, or leaves. Some are mummeries with a meaning attached; others are simply interesting or wonderful objects. One *gwma*, *dzu* (lion), consists of a sound made by passing the hand down a stick on a piece of hide held over a pot. These *digwma* are traditional in initiations, but very often new ones are invented and, since different regiments or areas come on many ceremonial occasions with their own *digwma*, there may be a mild competitive element in the showing of *digwma*, especially in *khoba* and *nyali*. Laws taught in initiation ceremonial are also referred to as *digwma*. But the greatest of all *digwma* are the *gwamma* drums, which are looked upon as gods and are associated with the ancestors and religious ritual. *Digwma* vary from lgwa or mummeries to semi-gods. The element of awe, so conspicuously absent in Lovedu religious practices, is found in their attitude towards *digwma*—not that there is any display of awe towards them or in their presence, but that in referring to some of them people talk as though of something awesome or god-like. Even the *muiqiqani*, ancestral spirits, who come to earth when *gwamma* drums are played or at religious ceremonies, are thought of as *digwma*, which in this manner become part of religion itself.

The greatest *gwma* of the *nyali* is *khinqiqani* or *khinqiquala*, referred to also as the great Bird of Muhale or of Rhodesia who, like most *digwma*, is believed to come from a pool in the river. It is a *gwma* of the men and manifests itself only when there is moonlight, returning, it is said, to its pool when the moon is dark. But it is always there, secreted in its enclosure. The girls have to sing whether it is there or not, and often, though the moon is dark, it whistles its directions and commands. It consists of a light, semicircular framework about 4 ft. high, over which are put strings of the *mugu* thorn tree (*Acacia robusta*), which have been placed in water to become black. Surmounting it all is a small head crowned with an ostrich or other feather. It is seen only occasionally, when it comes dancing into the *nyali* courtyard at night, and, in spite of bright moonlight, its black colour makes it difficult to discern it clearly. It speaks and sings by whistling through an instrument similar to, but larger than, that used by *muiqiqani*, made of the leg-bone of cattle.

This Bird is the ruling spirit of the *nyali*. It has many praises used by the girls in its honour. Coming as it does when the green foods of summer are being eaten and the grass is long, it is the embodiment of plenty and has daily to receive from each initiate summer foods and beer. All the time it is there every one in the area who makes beer has to bring one calabash to its enclosure. If this is not observed the person may be fined. The Bird regulates the whole procedure of the *nyali*, ordering which songs have to be sung, telling the girls when to dance, when to stop singing, what to do. At times it even gets angry and then, if it is dancing, it may stamp out the courtyard fires. Any infringement of the rules of the school are referred to as 'breaking the ribs' (*ku rwa iqaqari*)

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

The immortality of Lovedu spirits is of practical importance in their working religion only for two or three generations back; beyond this they are hardly remembered. The spirits that cause most trouble are one's grandparents, and in religious practices these tend to be the most important. Both sides of the family, that of one's father and that of one's mother, are equally important; both cause trouble and both must be placated; and this is an accurate reflection of the social structure, of relationship reckoned bilaterally, and of the cattle links. The configuration of the ancestral world is no different from that of the ordinary world. It is therefore not surprising that all four lines of grandparents are recognized. Even when a spirit in the line of the father's father is being placated, the line of the father's mother may also be mentioned: thus we have heard an officiator in a *phasa* ceremony calling, not only upon his father's younger brother, the spirit troubling its granddaughter, but also upon his father, father's father, elder brother, mother, and elder sister. Dedicated goats to male ancestors tend to, but do not always, run in the male line. As in social or political arrangements, the male line may recede before the female; it may even, as far as ancestors are concerned, become almost completely obliterated. In the Matsui family, for instance, the father's father's line is neglected, except for *ku phasa*, when they cause illness, but the father's mother's line is all important. It is to the latter that the beast Mamujaji is dedicated and it is to this beast that the new corn is given every year. This emphasis reflects the links with the queen which the family wishes to emphasize, for Mamujaji, the ancestor of the father's mother, was mother of Mujaji I.

The coherence of the social and the ancestral worlds is seen even in regard to the implications of the *mavungulo* system. Biological relationship not socially recognised is of no importance in religion, and not only can the biological father of an illegitimate child or his relatives never cause illness, for the 'gods follow the cattle' (*modimo o tsela dikhomo*), but the queen's ancestors cause illness in children of any of her wives, whoever their father may be, and it is the queen who is often required to *phasa* for them. In the gathering together in worship of all relatives the social system is similarly reflected. When after many deaths or much illness in a family the dice order a *mukhuvo*, a religious gathering of all relatives, not only the lineage but relatives on both sides (*mulugo*), including those by marriage, meet. Each brings a basket of corn as a contribution towards the beer for the occasion, but a relative who is on bad terms with the others will, of course, simply stay away.

Not only the scheme of institutionalised social relations, but the nature of these relations in ordinary life is reflected in religion. The fact that the gods were known in life is largely responsible for many of the outstanding characteristics of Lovedu worship. We must not expect a behaviour pattern of humble worshipper to omnipotent god. Awe and trepidation characterise the attitude to the mysterical secrets of great *digoma*, but they constitute a category poles apart from the ancestors and *dithugula*. People pray to ancestors as man to man, scolding them or reminding them of their duties to their children. The following prayer, uttered when Pheduli was brought home, is typical: 'We say, here is your corn, Pheduli.

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

769 What sort of person are you who do not live happily with your people?
182 To-day all your children have gathered here. They have come to see you
781 given corn. And to-morrow, when they depart, don't let there be a single one who remains troubled. Don't seize them, they are your children.' The difference between a spirit and the very old is not great, for an aged person is sometimes even referred to as 'our god' (*modimo wetu*) and his displeasure during life may be 'seen in the dice' as the cause of illness or, after death, be avenged upon those who have angered him. An old wife of the queen, who had long been ailing, sent her a message saying, 'Unless you give me an liver, I'll never die, but keep on troubling people.' The queen, notoriously averse from slaughtering cattle for meat, nevertheless complied with this request, because it came from so old a woman.

769 Living relatives, even if not old, but because of the social implications
182 of their close relationship, may by conscious or even unconscious
783 (repressed) displeasure in their hearts cause illness. When Ramatiti's
786 daughter was about to set out for her new home, her mother, quite unexpectedly and without the previous knowledge of any one, took some water and squirted (*hu phasa*) it on the ground near the shrine, saying, 'You people of ours, I myself, mother of the girl, *phasa* lest they say I remained with a dissatisfied heart.' By intimating that she had no grievance, she tried to safeguard herself from being, at some future date, found in the dice as the cause of her daughter's barrenness. Unconscious grievances are recognised as working like our so-called repressed complexes. If the dice assign an illness, say barrenness, to a person who has no conscious complaint, he must nevertheless *phasa*, but his prayer will be, 'Don't say when you [the ancestors] seize her womb that it is I' (meaning, do not attribute your being 'stirred up' to dissatisfaction in my heart); or he may say, 'If it is I, let the child be well' (meaning, as I am unaware that I am the cause and do not wish to be, let the child recover). *Hu phasa* in these circumstances recognises psychological principles that have been clearly formulated only in the twentieth century. If one has a grievance one prays, 'Why is it that you rise up on my account? If it is I, I say, let them give me such-and-such a thing [e.g. beer of reconciliation] and you gods do not "be after" it' (cause further trouble about it).

781 As the gods have human attributes, 'worship' is not characterised by humility or formality. Even at the most important offerings you may find it difficult to catch the words of the officiator amid the talking and laughter of the onlookers. But you will probably hear him say, 'It is not water; truly it is beer', or 'It is not just *mahodu* (light beer); it is real beer', when he pours out flour and water and, you may see, as we once did, how he winks at his friends who smile at the deception. The asking of a favour from the gods with beer is patterned on everyday conceptions of reciprocity. You sometimes definitely state in your prayer, 'We give to you that you may give her [the patient] life.' Religion is cheerful; at the harvest offering the gods come to drink and be merry with you, and the idea of solemn communion with the gods for the uplifting of the soul, found in higher religions, is absent.

771 The relation of religion and morality is too large a subject for discussion here, for both concepts are different from ours. Their relation is not

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Loveda FX14

of the lines of the father's mother and mother's father, such as is mentioned by Stayt for the Venda. The complete absence of any awe or reverence when the Bantu approach their ancestors is seen in the loud talk, jokes and laughter of all except the officiators themselves, and the discussions that frequently take place between the officiator and his neighbours in the middle of proceedings as to what he should do next and how he should do it. As is the case with Europeans, some families are more religious than others, and the very human tendency to forget the gods when things go well is well marked. Some people are always giving to the gods, telling them of all important happenings in the family, giving them a share of any beer that arrives at the kraal, asking their blessings; others forget to perform even the harvest thanksgiving and, unless illness or other trouble comes to show the anger of the ancestors, years may elapse without any religious ceremony taking place.

THE DOCTOR. No religious ceremony of any importance takes place without the co-operation and advice of the doctor; indeed the majority of offerings that are made are done on the advice of the doctor, who determines in every case all such details as which charms are to be used, whether any special relatives have to be present, what if any beads are to play a part. The great doctor is a figure of inter-tribal importance; he works not in one tribe but in many, a fact which largely accounts for the uniformity in the religious practices of different tribes, in contrast to the diversity found in any one tribe. All doctors are not, however, of the same importance. The herbalist, of whom there are hundreds, both male and female, has a limited sphere. He has inherited from his parents or some other relative, often, in the case of a woman, from her husband, one or more medicines or type of medical treatment such as the cutting of veins for blood-letting and a cure for epilepsy, and this he dispenses to all who come.

The doctor, *par excellence*, is the bone-thrower who combines with his divining an extensive knowledge of medicine. There is nothing spectacular about the Sotho doctor; he wears no special or distinguishing dress; his methods are not directed to securing any dramatic effects. Unlike the doctor in Zulu-Xhosa society who is called to his profession by the spirits, undergoes a long period of *ukutwasa* during